

Federal Communications Commission

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message transmitted on the distress frequency, the message may be repeated on any other available frequency on which attention might be attracted.

[51 FR 31213, Sept. 2, 1986, as amended at 69 FR 64674, Nov. 8, 2004]

§ 80.320 Radiotelephone distress call and message transmission procedure.

(a) The radiotelephone distress procedure consists of:

(1) The radiotelephone alarm signal (whenever possible);

(2) The distress call;

(3) The distress message.

(b) The DSC distress procedure consists of:

(1) Transmission by a mobile unit in distress;

(2) Reception;

(3) Acknowledgement of distress calls;

(4) Distress relays.

(c) Radiotelephone distress transmissions must be made slowly and distinctly, each word being clearly pronounced to facilitate transcription.

(d) After the transmission by radiotelephony of its distress message, the mobile station may be requested to transmit suitable signals followed by its call sign or name, to permit direction-finding stations to determine its position. This request may be repeated at frequent intervals if necessary.

(e) The distress message, preceded by the distress call, must be repeated at intervals until an answer is received. This repetition must be preceded by the radiotelephone alarm signal whenever possible.

(f) When the mobile station in distress receives no answer to a distress message transmitted on the distress frequency, the message may be repeated on any other available frequency on which attention might be attracted.

[51 FR 31213, Sept. 2, 1986, as amended]

§ 80.321 Acknowledgement of receipt of distress message.

(a) Stations of the maritime mobile service which receive a distress message from a mobile station which is beyond any possible doubt in their vicinity must immediately acknowledge receipt.

However, in areas where reliable communication with one or more coast stations is practicable, ship stations may defer this acknowledgement for a short interval so that a coast station may acknowledge receipt.

(b) Stations of the maritime mobile service which receive a distress message from a mobile station which beyond any possible doubt is not in their vicinity, must allow a short interval of time to elapse before acknowledging receipt of the message in order to permit stations nearer to the mobile station in distress to acknowledge receipt without interference.

§ 80.322 Form of acknowledgement.

(a) The acknowledgement of receipt of a radiotelegraph distress message is transmitted in the following form:

(1) The distress signal SOS;

(2) The call sign of the station sending the distress message, sent three times;

(3) The word DE;

(4) The call sign of the station acknowledging receipt, sent three times;

(5) The group RRR;

(6) The message signal SOS.

(b) The acknowledgement of receipt of a radiotelephone distress message is transmitted in the following form:

(1) The distress signal MAYDAY;

(2) The call sign or other identification of the station sending the distress message, spoken three times;

(3) The words THIS IS;

(4) The call sign or other identification of the station acknowledging receipt, spoken three times;

(5) The word RECEIVED;

(6) The distress signal MAYDAY.

§ 80.323 Information furnished by an acknowledging station.

(a) Every mobile station which acknowledges receipt of a distress message must on the order of the master or person responsible for the ship, aircraft, or other vehicle carrying such mobile station, transmit as soon as possible the following information in the order shown:

(1) Its identifier;

(2) Its position;

(3) The speed at which it is proceeding towards, and the approximate

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time it will take to reach the mobile station in distress.

(b) Before sending this message, the station must ensure that it will not interfere with the emissions of other stations better situated to render immediate assistance to the station in distress.

§ 80.324 Transmission of distress message by station not itself in distress.

(a) A mobile station or a land station which learns that a mobile station is in distress must transmit a distress message in any of the following cases:

(1) When the station in distress cannot transmit the distress message.

(2) When the master or person responsible for the ship, aircraft, or other vehicle not in distress, or for the land station, believes that further help is necessary.

(3) When, although not in a position to assist, it has heard a distress message which has not been acknowledged. When a mobile station transmits such a distress message, it must notify the authorities who may be able to assist.

(b) Transmission must be made on the international distress frequencies or on any other available frequency on which attention might be attracted.

(c) Transmission of the distress message must always be preceded by the call indicated below, which must itself be preceded whenever possible by the radiotelegraph or radiotelephone alarm signal. This call consists of:

(1) When radiotelegraphy is used:

(i) The signal DDD SOS SOS SOS DDD;

(ii) The word DE;

(iii) The call sign of the transmitting station, sent three times.

(2) When radiotelephony is used:

(i) The signal MAYDAY RELAY, spoken three times;

(ii) The words THIS IS;

(iii) The call sign or other identification of the transmitting station, spoken three times.

(d) When the radiotelegraph alarm signal is used, an interval of two minutes must be allowed, whenever this is considered necessary, before the transmission of the call mentioned in paragraph (c)(1) of this section.

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§ 80.325 Control of distress traffic.

(a) Distress traffic consists of all messages relating to the immediate assistance required by the mobile station in distress. In distress traffic, the distress signal must be sent before the call and at the beginning of the preamble of any radiotelegram.

(b) The control of distress traffic is the responsibility of the mobile station in distress or of the station which has sent the distress message. These stations may delegate the control of the distress traffic to another station.

(c) The station in distress or the station in control of distress traffic may impose silence either on all stations of the mobile service in the area or on any station which interferes with the distress traffic. It must address these instructions “to all stations” or to one station only, according to circumstances. In either case, it must use one of the following signals which are reserved for use by the mobile station in distress and for the station controlling distress traffic:

(1) In radiotelegraphy, the abbreviation QRT, followed by the distress signal SOS.

(2) In radiotelephony, the signal SEELONCE MAYDAY.

(d) If essential, any station of the mobile service near the ship, aircraft, or other vehicle in distress may also impose silence. It must use for this purpose:

(1) In radiotelegraphy, the abbreviation QRT, followed by the word DISTRESS and its own call sign;

(2) In radiotelephony, the word SEELONCE, followed by the word DISTRESS and its own call sign or other identification.

§ 80.326 Notification of resumption of normal working.

(a) When distress traffic has ceased, or when complete silence is no longer necessary on a frequency which has been used for distress traffic, the station which has controlled this traffic must transmit on that frequency a message addressed “to all stations” indicating that normal working may be resumed.

(1) In radiotelegraphy, this message consists of:

(i) The distress signal SOS;